

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A video switcher, comprising:  
a plurality of inputs for receiving a respective plurality of input video signals of mixed aspect ratios;  
a plurality of aspect ratio converters integrated within the video switcher and configured for generating respective aspect ratio converted background and preset signals based on the input video signals; ~~and~~  
means for providing both the aspect ratio converted background and preset signals and the input video signals as outputs; and  
a crosspoint matrix and a deserializer module provided before the plurality of aspect ratio converters.
2. (Previously presented) The video switcher of claim 1, further comprising:  
means for receiving signals having a converted and a native signal format; and  
means for combining the received signals having the converted and the native signal format into a composite effect.
3. (Previously presented) The video switcher of claim 1, wherein the switcher is adapted to control parameters including at least one of pan and scan and letterbox.
4. (Previously presented) The video switcher of claim 1, wherein the switcher allows integrated control of Up Convert and Down Convert processes.
5. (Previously presented) The video switcher of claim 1, wherein the switcher is adapted to control downstream switching between converted and non-converted signal formats.
6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously presented) The video switcher of claim 1, further comprising means for combining one or more of the plurality of the input video signals to form a composite video signal.

8. (Previously presented) The video switcher of claim 1, further comprising means for converting the aspect ratio of any two selected input video signals via the plurality of aspect ratio converters.

9. (Previously presented) The video switcher of claim 1, further comprising a crosspoint matrix provided before the plurality of aspect ratio converters.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently amended) ~~The video switcher of claim 1, further comprising~~ A video switcher, comprising:

a plurality of inputs for receiving a respective plurality of input video signals of mixed aspect ratios;

a plurality of aspect ratio converters integrated within the video switcher and configured for generating respective aspect ratio converted background and preset signals based on the input video signals;

means for providing both the aspect ratio converted background and preset signals and the input video signals as outputs; and

a deserializer module and a key processor provided before the plurality of aspect ratio converters.